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SPEECH

OF

HON. E. C. CABELL, OF FLORIDA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 5, 1850,

In Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message communicating the Constitution of California.

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Mr. CABELL said :

Mr. CHAIRMAN : It is perhaps as well, or better for me, that I have not, till now, succeeded in accomplishing my wish to address the committee on the "absorbing question of the day." Much that I desired to say, has been better said by other gentlemen, who entertain views similar to my own, on the subject of slavery and "the rights of the South." Particularly has my friend from Georgia, who sits near me, [Mr. TOOMBS,] anticipated the expression of my opinions, in his very able speech recently delivered—the sentiments of which I endorse and adopt. In what I may say, I shall endeavor not to weary the committee by a detailed argument of points made by other gentlemen.

While the House was in a state of disorganization, from its inability to elect a presiding officer, I was prevented, by the adoption of a resolution stopping debate, from giving the reasons which induced me to decline to act with the Whig party in the election of Speaker.

At the commencement of the last Congress, I had cheerfully voted for the accomplished Representative from the city of Boston. For this my political opponents at home assailed me. I did not excuse, but justified myself, for *I did what was right*. My constituents sustained me. They all expected me to vote for Mr. WINTHROP again. Had I done so, there would have been no complaint against me. With the Whig party of my State, Mr. WINTHROP is a great favorite—no man from a non-slaveholding State as much so. They would have been gratified, if I could have felt authorized to cast my vote for him. With the experience of the last canvass, the Democratic party would not again have ventured to charge me with want of fealty to the South. I was not, therefore, influenced by any fear of embarrassment at home. I regret that I could not give my support to a gentleman between whom and myself there exists the kindest feelings of personal friendship.

This subject, Mr. Chairman, has lost its interest; and if it had not, I have not time now to speak of it. My constituents have confidence enough in me to believe that my course was dictated solely by a regard for their interests, and that I would not have voted against the candidate of my party, and a gentleman held in such high esteem as the late Speaker of this House, without the most satisfactory reasons. It will suffice to say, sir, that the circumstances attending the meeting of the present, and the last Congress, were widely different. Mexican territory had not then been acquired.

Mr. WINTHROP, like myself, was opposed to its acquisition. He agreed with me in regard to the proper conduct of the war, which the House of Representatives had declared to be "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun." He was the representative of the conservative feeling of the country, which, if it could have found a place in the breast of the late Administration, would have prevented a state of things, threatening the overthrow of the Constitution, and a dissolution of the Union. But, sir, contrary to his wishes, to my wishes, and to the wishes of the entire Whig party, territory was acquired. A new issue is presented. We, of the South, not Whigs or Democrats, but all the southern people, claim a right to possess and enjoy in common with the people of the North, at least a portion of the country which we have fought for, and are to pay for. The caucus which nominated Mr. WINTHROP, denied us this right, by refusing to adopt a resolution declaring that "Congress ought not to pass any law prohibiting slavery in the territories of California and New Mexico, nor any law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia."

The refusal to adopt this and another resolution submitted, might properly be regarded as equivalent to the affirmation of their converse. I resolved not to sanction doctrines so fatal to my section of the Union, and to the Union itself, by voting for the nominee of that caucus.

Sir, there are other facts and other considerations, to which I need not now allude, which removed all doubt from my mind of the propriety of the course pursued by the five southern Whigs who acted with me. We have no reason to regret what we did—we are satisfied that good has come out of it. If the House had continued disorganized for a few weeks longer, the questions now distracting the country would have been settled. All now admit that the crisis is at hand which we then saw, and the minds of men, in every section, are directed to a consideration of the means of removing the causes of danger.

But, sir, enough on this subject. Let me say, however, in this connection, that I have heard much, and said much, to my constituents, respecting the conservatism of the northern Whig party. I believed what I said. And I do not hesitate to express the opinion now, that on all questions, except this of slavery, they do constitute the conservative body of the North; and on this they are more reliable than the northern Democratic party. With individual exceptions, entitled to our most

grateful thanks, men of *all parties* advocate the most destructive measures.

A few weeks ago, we had an illustration of the meaning which northern gentlemen attach to conservatism. A gentleman from Ohio [Mr. SCHENCK] made a very good speech on what he called the "spirit of conservatism," which influenced his political action, in the course of which he denounced one of his colleagues [Mr. GIDDINGS] as an *agitator*. Now, sir, terms of condemnation too strong cannot be applied to the *agitating member*. But, as the conservative member proceeded, we found him contending that, for all practical measures, he was more of an anti-slavery man than the agitator. Indeed, sir, the only controversy between the two gentlemen was, *which was the best Free-Soiler or Anti Slaveryite*.

The same line of argument was followed by my friend from New York, [Mr. DUEK.] in a letter to his constituents, which has become quite famous. So with other gentlemen. We all listened with interest, a few days ago, to the speech of the late Speaker of the House of Representatives, [Mr. WINTHROP,] in which he administered a well deserved castigation to the "Free-Soil sect." He was specially severe upon another *agitating member* from Ohio, [Mr. ROOR,] against whom it cannot be denied he made out a clear case. But, sir, what was the burden of his complaint against that member? Why, that he [Mr. R.] was the greatest enemy of the Wilmot proviso—that if the proviso was killed, "its death must lie at the door of the member from Ohio"—it was "a victim to the restless vanity and headstrong rashness" of that member. He went on then to say, that the member from Ohio had committed "worse than a fault;" that he had committed "a mistake—a fatal blunder;" that he should not then have called on "the North to show its HAND."

Now, Mr. Chairman, what matters it to us by what names gentlemen choose to call themselves, or to characterize others, whether Abolitionists, Agitators, Free-Soilers, or Conservatives, so long as they all advocate the most destructive measures. I know no substantial difference between Democrats, Free-Soilers, and Whigs, at the North, except in their *party organization*. With a few individual exceptions, they are all waging ruthless war on the institutions of the South, which they seem resolved to circumscribe, cripple, and destroy, if they can. There is rarely a measure proposed by the Agitator, which is not voted for by the Conservative. The Agitator boldly threatens, and plainly tells us his purpose and object—the Conservative says nothing, but quietly and stealthily binds our arms, and places the rope round our necks. If the southern man resists, he, too, is called an Agitator—if he tamely submits, his executioner dignifies him with the title of Conservative. We may have such Conservatives among us. I am, and ever shall be, a Conservative in the true sense of the term; but sir, I am not such a one as this.

Mr. Chairman, I have watched with painful anxiety the progress of anti-slavery feeling and anti-slavery action in the non-slaveholding States. I believe that the sentiment of hostility to the institution of slavery, is *common to all parties*, and that there is a determination to invoke all the powers of the Federal Government to break down that institution, and thus to *destroy more than fifteen*

hundred millions of the property of the South. It is this, sir, which causes our anxiety. Is it to be wondered at, that southern men evince alarm and excitement on this subject? It is this which gives such absorbing interest to questions now engaging our attention, that Congress finds itself unable to proceed with the ordinary business of the country.

This deplorable state of things, Mr. Chairman, has not come unexpectedly to many of us. It was foreseen, foretold, and deprecated by every Whig member of the last and the preceding Congress. The entire Whig party warned the country of the danger to result from the acquisition of Mexican territory. But, sir, unfortunately, our counsels were not heeded. The late Administration rushed recklessly on in its mad career of conquest, regardless of consequences. We have acquired foreign territory, but it is at the risk of our own glorious Confederacy. The Union is rocked to its very centre; and all the wisdom, and all the patriotism of the best men of our country, are required to save it from destruction. The evil day which was predicted, has come. The danger is upon us, and we should meet it as patriots, not as partisans. Let us "look not mournfully into the past," but anxiously at the present and into the future. Perils surround us on every hand. Particularly is there danger to the southern States. Their safety, and the foundations of civil society among them, are threatened. This is no time for personal or party crimination. The questions involved rise far above all party considerations. Southern men should now be banded together as one man, in defense of their honor and their constitutional rights—their individual, State, and sectional interests.

I must here be permitted to express my abhorrence of the course pursued by certain partisan editors, who profess to advocate southern rights and interests, and to desire union among southern men. There are some men whose souls cannot embrace their country, and who have not an aspiration above their party. Who is not struck with this, in reading the Washington Union newspaper? I have not time to do more than to refer to this paper. The person who writes its editorials, seems to have no other object than to make *party capital* out of the questions we are now so anxiously considering. Professing a desire to "unite the South," he wantonly charges the President of the United States—the choice of the entire Whig party of the South—with countenancing, if not advising, the incendiary resolutions of the New York Legislature, and others of similar character—with taking to his bosom, as "confidential advisers," the Senator from New Hampshire, and other Abolitionists, and with "*fomenting*," in every way, that agitation which threatens such disastrous consequences. These charges, known to be without foundation by him who makes them, can only have the effect of preventing a union of the friends of the President at the South, with the Democrats of the South. There is scarcely a number of the paper, to which I allude, which does not charge, that the entire Whig party is responsible for evils which surround us, and that southern Whigs are in alliance with northern Abolitionists. I read a single paragraph, which is nothing more than what we see in almost every number:

"The Federal or Whig party of the United States—the Abolition Federalists of the North, and the slaveholding

Whigs of the South, acting in alliance—are the authors of all the present evils and dangers that afflict the country, and imperil the peace of the Union.”

But, sir, I must pass on. I have seen a few other partisan papers at the South, which follow the example of the “Union.” There is one in my own State, in which I some time ago saw the atrocious sentiment, that “southern Whigs are no more to be trusted than northern Democrats.” I have generally observed, Mr. Chairman, that men who speak thus of southern men, are natives of non-slaveholding States, who hope to secure the favor of southern people, by being “more southern than the South itself.” I have never suspected that the senior editor of “The Union,” wrote one of the articles of the character referred to. He is a native of the South, and would not thus slander and vilify those among whom he was born.

Is it true, Mr. Chairman, that only the Whig party of the North is in alliance with Abolitionists? Do you not know, sir, that this is not so? The northern Democracy court the favor of Abolitionists, as do the northern Whigs, and far more frequently do we find them forming regular coalitions. Every Democratic Legislature of the northern States has passed resolutions expressing sentiments hostile to southern interests—Whig Legislatures have done the same thing. In Vermont, last year, the Democrats and Abolitionists held their conventions at the same time and place; and, on a comparison of the sentiments of the members of the two conventions on the subject of slavery, there was found to be such an entire coincidence of opinion, that the two parties, as they expressed it, “fused” into one. In Connecticut, we know that three Whig candidates for Congress were defeated, by a coalition of Democrats and Abolitionists, who, having adopted the “Buffalo platform,” elected three free-soil Democrats to this House. The Democratic members of the Ohio Legislature united with Abolitionists, and elected the Abolition Senator from that State, [Mr. CHASE.] But, sir, why multiply proof? We all know the principle on which the late Presidential canvass was conducted at the North. General CASS was recommended to the people, on the ground that he was, in every particular, an anti-slavery man. The Whigs said the same of General TAYLOR. Sir, all parties at the North are hostile to us, and I can never place confidence in any, till they slough off the putrescence of Abolitionism. I protest against the allegation, that southern Whigs are untrue to the South, and that the Democratic party of the North merits southern confidence.

Mr. Chairman, I have been surprised and mortified at the character of the speeches of many of my southern Democratic friends. They all profess, and I doubt not desire, a union of southern men. Yet they pursue a course which must estrange us from each other, and divide the South. Their speeches are calculated to destroy the confidence of southern constituency in southern Whigs. They may thereby secure a party advantage. But I must say to my friends, that we are not prepared to go over to the Democratic party. When we tell them that we desire Union with them on this vital question of slavery, we mean a union of the South for the sake of the South, not for the benefit of the Democratic party.

A Whig representative from the State of North Carolina, [Mr. CLINGMAN,] who commenced this

debate, to prove how entirely he was uninfluenced by party associations, made a speech far more acceptable to Democrats than to Whigs. He was followed by a gentleman from Texas, who commenced with a vindication of his own party at the North from the suspicion of free-soilism, but charged that there was a coalition of Whigs and Free-Soilers. Then followed my friend from Virginia, [Mr. SEDDON,] in a speech highly offensive to the friends of the President, charging him with offences and usurpation of power which, if true, would justify his impeachment. Most of the gentlemen who have spoken on that side of the House, while they uphold the rights of the South, have not failed to labor hard for their party. There are exceptions. My friend before me [Mr. VENABLE] is one. The gentleman from Maryland, [Mr. McLANE,] who spoke a day or two ago, seems not to have thought of aught else but his party. Party, party, party; we heard nothing but “the Democratic party,” from beginning to the end. That I may not misrepresent my friend from Maryland, I quote his words: “It (the Democratic party) might run away from non-intervention; it might run away from the free-trade principles of the tariff of ‘46; it might even come here and offer to make terms with the protectionists; but still he believed that the great heart of the Democratic party would live.” Farther on, the gentleman says, “he held the sentiments to-day which he had expressed the first day of the session, that he was with the national Democracy; that he did not care if he stood side by side with men who entertained different opinions from him on the subject of slavery,” &c. Whatever it does, whatever its opinions and its policy may be, I understand that the gentleman from Maryland will stick to the Democratic party. Never was love more devoted:

“I know not, I ask not, if guilt’s in that heart:
I know that I love thee, whatever thou art.”

These gentlemen say, that the only hope of the country is in the Democratic party. I—southern Whigs—do not think so. If this is to be the basis of our union, I tell gentlemen plainly we can not be united.

Sir, it is not true that I, or the Whig party, are in any way responsible for the state of things which we so much deplore. You have got us into the difficulty, which we did all in our power to avoid. But, making common cause with you, we shall do all we can to get you out of it. Sir, I feel that in approaching this question, I shall know no party. My interests, my associations, my affiliations, my affections, are with the South. The people of the South are my people, “their Gods shall be my Gods,” their fate my fate. If they come out of the struggle in which they are engaged triumphantly, I shall rejoice with them; if they go down, and ruin overwhelm them, I shall be involved in the same common ruin. The cause of the South is the cause of right and justice. It is the cause of the country, and appeals to the patriotic and constitution-loving of every section of the Union.

What do we of the South ask? We have fought for, and are to pay for, the territory acquired from Mexico, and we merely ask that we may not be excluded from its enjoyment. We cannot go, unless you permit us to take our property with us; and we contend that Congress, with its limited powers, can not, and, with any powers, should not,

exclude us. As well may we say that, because policy requires that we should do all in our power to increase the population of the newly-acquired territory, none but married men shall be allowed to go to it. Or, because it is against the dictates of humanity to expose women and children to the rigors and hardships of a frontier life, no man shall carry with him his wife or his daughters. Or, because we believe that the collection of masses of men in manufacturing towns has an anti-republican tendency, that the men who are to occupy this territory shall not carry machinery with them, nor establish manufactures. Or, because agricultural and pastoral pursuits are most congenial to liberty, none shall go but those who are thus engaged. Or, because *slavery* tends to independence of thought, feeling, and action, and those who hold their fellow-men in bondage, *never can become slaves*, the interest and perpetuity of the Republic demand that slavery should be established, and, therefore, that none but slaveholders shall be allowed to occupy the territory.

Admit this power, sir, and there is no limit. I have no doubt of the constitutional right of the southern people to go, with their property, to all the territories of the United States, and of the duty of this Government to *protect* them in the enjoyment of that property. We stand by the Constitution, which guarantees *equal rights* to all. The people of the North and of the South, have an equal right to possess and enjoy this territory. If you exclude slavery, we cannot go; and you *invade our rights*. If you admit it, you *may go*; if you do not, it is a mere matter of taste. In the latter case, you offend a moral sentiment, or sickly sentimentality. In the former, you violate a guaranteed constitutional right. For the sake of the Union—for the sake of peace, harmony, and good fellowship, we may make concessions to your *taste*; and, while we insist on our right to carry our property with us to every portion of our common territory, we may, as a compromise, surrender something of our constitutional rights. Such were the motives which influenced southern men in giving their assent to the Missouri compromise, in which the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. BAKER] says, we recognized the power of Congress, against which I am now contending. We did not, in that case, recognize this power. We claimed a constitutional right to occupy, in common with you, the whole territory then belonging to the United States; but, for the reasons just mentioned, we surrendered a portion of our rights.

We ask you to *protect* us in the enjoyment of our property, and the gentleman from Illinois says, we thereby admit the power of Congress to inhibit slavery. He contends that the power to *protect* necessarily implies the power to *destroy*. Not so, sir. Congress may and should protect the citizens of this District in the enjoyment of their lands, houses, cattle and other property; but no one claims for it power to take away or destroy such property. So, also, Congress can protect us in the enjoyment of our slave property in the States, but not even the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. GIDDINGS] claims for it the power to abolish or destroy that property.

But, sir, I care not whether Congress has the constitutional power or not, to exclude us from our common territory. The exercise of that power is

against right and justice, and I shall resist it as strongly as though it was palpably and admittedly unconstitutional. I will resist such a law, or the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or the slave trade between the States, or in the States, whatever may be the decision of the Supreme Court, as to the powers of Congress. Laws so fatally unjust and oppressive, should not be submitted to, whatever power may be conceded to Congress. You, gentlemen of the North, would resist under similar circumstances. Suppose Congress, in the exercise of a power clearly constitutional, should refuse to do anything for the benefit of commerce in the New England States, should refuse to build or light your light-houses, or should destroy them and remove the bouys and beacons, marking the channels leading into her harbors, and should abolish her post offices, and refuse to establish others—I ask you, men of New England, if you would not “resist, at any hazard,” such legislation against your interest. You would be unworthy of your proud and noble ancestors if you did not.

Why is it, sir, that gentlemen object to the diffusion of slavery, and the addition of more slave States to the Union? How is it possible that any interest of the North can be injuriously affected? How can we commit aggressions on you? The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CAMPBELL] tells us, that the annexation of Texas, was southern policy, by which the North has been injured. This point has been already answered by others. The gentleman knows, that Texas was acquired by Mr. Polk, who was elected by a majority of northern votes, over a gentleman [Mr. CLAY] who was opposed to annexation. He says, the North is opposed to the admission of more slave States into the Union, because they send free-trade men to Congress, who will legislate, injuriously, to the interests of the free white labor of the North. But is this the real objection? No, sir. When a southern State is admitted, the political party, which happens to be in the ascendant, sends its Representatives and Senators to Congress. My own State sends me, a Whig. On all questions of party policy, I vote with the northern Whigs. The States of Texas and Arkansas, send Democrats, who vote with the Democratic party of the North. The reason which the gentleman from Ohio assigns, for opposition to the admission of more slave States, should cause northern Democrats to advocate their admission. But, sir, this is not the reason of his opposition. It was no more the vote of Texas, which defeated the tariff bill of '42, than of Iowa. That bill was defeated by the casting vote of a Vice President from Pennsylvania, and by Democratic votes from free, as well as slave States. If it was because slave States send free-trade men to Congress, that the gentleman opposes the admission of more slave States, why is it that he is now advocating the admission of California, knowing, as he does, that there will, thereby, be added, two free-trade men to the number of Senators of the United States. No, sir; this is but a pretext. That gentleman, and others, are influenced solely by feelings of hostility to the institution of slavery, and unreasonable jealousy of the South. They made no objection to the admission of Iowa, Wisconsin, and other new States of the West, though all of those States send men to the Senate of the United States, as much “opposed

to the interest of the free labor of the North," as are the Senators from Texas. The true difficulty, is the one I have stated.

The gentleman professes to regard slavery a curse, and tells us of the opinion of Mr. Jefferson and others of his day. That, sir, is his opinion, and theirs. I do not intend to argue this question. We do not so regard it. We believe that in tropical, or warm climates, where two months moderate labor secures all the necessaries of life, *involuntary labor is essential* to the development of the resources of the country. History teaches us, that the most stable governments have been those in which slavery existed. I cannot go into details on this branch of the question, but shall merely refer gentlemen to the history of the ancient Jews, and of Lacedæmon. Rome did not lose her liberties, until the number of her Freedmen became nearly equal to the original Roman citizens. The strongest Governments on this continent, except our own, are those of Cuba and Brazil. And here, in our own country, we do not find that southern men have less of energy and influence, than men of the North. Indeed, we daily hear northern gentlemen complaining of the undue influence of the South, in the affairs of this Confederacy. This does not proceed from the force of numbers, but from the *moral power of slavery*. Nowhere is there so pure a spirit of freedom and true republicanism, as with us. It is true, that our population is not so dense as with you. But numbers do not necessarily constitute national strength, as is exemplified by the history of Ireland and China. We hear northern men boasting of the great increase of their population. They tell us of fifty thousand foreigners becoming citizens of some of their States in a single year, and exclaim, "See how wonderfully prosperous we are!" Does this accession add to their prosperity? Their alms-houses become filled with paupers, and their poor lists alarmingly increased. Sir, I do not believe there are a dozen paupers in my whole State. Nowhere is there so much *individual happiness*, as among the southern people. We have numbers enough for all political purposes—enough to insure the respect of other Governments. This point having been attained, I think it would be better for us to reserve our country for our own citizens, and their children. Can you say that life, liberty, or property, are more secure with you than with us? Is the happiness of the present inhabitants increased by the influx of foreign population? When we look to the power acquired by strangers to our institutions, are your Governments better—more pure, or more secure, than with us? Is there not something alarming in the disposition we see among honorable Senators—candidates for the Presidency—to pander to this power. But, sir, I cannot dwell longer on this subject.

You, gentlemen of the North, denounce slavery, and tell us it ought to be abolished. You wish to exterminate it. But you will not suffer our emancipated slaves to go among you. Members of the last Congress will recollect the declarations of a gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. SAWYER,] who was as firm and decided an advocate of southern rights, as we have ever had from a non-slaveholding State. But he told us that if we set our slaves free, none of them should go to his State. "Three hundred thousand freemen of Ohio would line the banks of

the Ohio river to receive them on the points their bayonets, and drive them from his State. You will not receive them when they go among you with our assent. You only take them to your hearts when they abscond from their masters. Your people will steal, but will not accept them as a gift. Northern men who seem to be most sensitive on this subject, are those who profess to take the sacred Scriptures for their rule of moral action. Let me cite them a single passage from the Old Testament:

"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hands; do to her as it pleases thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way of Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself unto her hands." Genesis, ch. xvi., vers. 6-9.

How different is the conduct of your Bible-loving and law-abiding Abolitionist! What says a gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. GIDDINGS?]

"When a fugitive slave was on the free soil of Ohio * * they left the slave to his natural right to defend himself, and if the slave slew the master in self-defence, he would pronounce him a good fellow."

Now, gentlemen—I appeal to you as candid and fair men—if you succeed in your purpose to abolish slavery against our will, I submit to you, whether it is right and just, that you should insist on their remaining with us, as freed-men. Your own sense of justice would require you to suffer them to be distributed among all the States, in proportion to the white population. You say you are "calculating men." Have you ever calculated how many free negroes each of your States would receive, according to your present population, and the number of slaves in the South? The State of New York would have near five hundred and fifty thousand. The cities of New York and Philadelphia each about ninety thousand. Are you desirous to show this "evidence of your prosperity" by such an addition to your population?

If you take away our slaves, you should pay for them. Have you calculated the amount each State would have to pay? In 1840, the number of slaves was two millions four hundred and eighty-seven thousand. They are now over three millions—worth more than fifteen hundred millions of dollars. The proportion for the State of New York would be about two hundred and fifty millions.

These are considerations which fair, reasonable, and just men should not lose sight of.

If you do not propose to pay us for our slaves, can you ask us to throw away so large an amount of property?

If they are not to be sent out of our country, (and all the resources of this Government will not defray the expense of their transportation,) it becomes me to enquire what will be the condition of that part of the South which I in part represent. Within the period I have named, the number of slaves will have doubled, and by that time, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky will probably have abolished slavery, and all the slaves of those States, with their increase, be precipitated upon us. Then indeed will slavery be an intolerable evil, if slave territory be circumscribed as you propose. You will not let our blacks come among you. It will be utterly out of our power to send them to

Africa. We should have no alternative but to abandon our homes, or *exterminate* the slaves. And this, sir, is the state to which northern philanthropy will reduce us!

In contemplation of the future, we demand an outlet for our blacks, through which they may find their way to the equatorial regions, where, if you please, they may become free. This, you say, you will not give us. You avow your purpose to hedge us in, *with the view to force emancipation on the southern States.* A gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS,] said, a few days ago:

"I am opposed to the diffusion of slavery, because confining it within its present limits, will bring the States themselves to its gradual abolition. * * * * * This admitted result is, to my mind, one of the most agreeable consequences of the legitimate restriction of slavery. Confine this malady within its present limits, surround it by a *cordon of freemen*, that it cannot spread, and in less than twenty-five years, every slaveholding State in the Union, will have on its statute books a law for the gradual and final extinction of slavery."

But, I am told, this gentleman is a fanatic, and that we should not regard what he may say. But, sir, did we not hear virtually the same sentiment from a moderate *conservative* Member, the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. BAKER,] when he told us there should be *no more slave territory, and no more slave States admitted into the Union?* Similar declarations have been made again and again, and what northern man on this floor has denied that this was the settled purpose of the North? Perhaps the gentleman from Pennsylvania "*showed the hand of the North*" too soon and too plainly.

If the powers of this Federal Government, are to be used for the avowed purpose of crippling and ultimately destroying the great interests of the southern States, what is the value of the Union to us?

Mr. Chairman, this Union was formed on calculation—on the very nicest calculation, and can only be continued on calculation. When it is used as an instrument of wrong and oppression to one of its sections, it cannot last. God knows I am far, very far, from desiring its dissolution! Love of Union is a cherished and most sacred sentiment among the southern people. To preserve it, they will make almost any sacrifice short of their honor, or rights involving their independent existence. The idea of calculating its value has been abhorrent to us; but it has been forced upon us; and you know, sir, that the *sentiment of love*, not considerations of interest, which chiefly attaches us to the Union, is fast being weakened by the course of our northern fellow-citizens.

We have resolved to "resist, at every hazard, and to the last extremity," what is called the "spirit of the age," which would place us "under the ban of the empire," and array the powers of our Government against the interests of our section.

Legislature after legislature instructs Senators from the northern and northwestern States to vote for laws abolishing slavery in "every foot of ground over which the United States has jurisdiction"—in our "dockyards, arsenals, and forts," as well as in the District of Columbia, and the territories. Nothing but respect, which you profess to feel for the direct requirements of the Constitution, prevents you from laying your hands on it within the limits and jurisdiction of the States.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. STEVENS] says:

"By those compromises, Congress has no power over slavery in the States. I greatly regret that it is so; for, if it were within our legitimate control, I would go, regardless of all threats, for some just, safe, and certain means for its final extinction."

The sentiment of the people of the northern States is against us. There is among them, an abhorrence of slavery. Gentlemen here, and their State Legislatures, speak of it as a "*national disgrace*," which they are bound to blot out, so soon as it can be done, consistent with their obligation to support the Constitution. How long will it be before you may amend the Constitution? Free State after free State, as you call them, are to be admitted. You, and your legislatures, declare that you are "against the admission of another slaveholding State into the Federal Union." You have already avowed your purpose to do indirectly what you may not do directly, and will you wait to amend the Constitution, when you get the power of numbers in both houses of Congress? It is getting to be a favorite doctrine, that in our Government, "the will of the majority is supreme." It has been said that many clauses in the Constitution, confer upon Congress the power to abolish slavery in the States. May not the gentleman from Pennsylvania, have hinted at this, when he declared that the governments of the slave States were not republican, but *despotisms*. When we compare abolitionism, now, with what it was fifteen years ago, is the fear unreasonable, that the northern people may be induced to believe it their duty to "guaranty a *republican form of government* to every State in the Union," as required by the Constitution, and abolish the despotism of slavery. Perhaps the gentleman is "showing the hand of the North" too soon, in this case.

Mr. Chairman, the southern people will resist the consummation of the fatal measures of which I have spoken. Some of our statesmen recommend retaliation, and a suspension of intercourse with States, which place themselves in hostility to us. I express no opinion of the propriety of this course. A member of the Legislature of Georgia, proposed to make it penal for an attorney of that State, to collect a debt due to a citizen of such State, or for a Georgia sheriff to levy an execution for such debt, but to leave the parties to their remedy before the Federal court. You recollect the holy horror with which this "mad, revolutionary proposition" was regarded; and yet, sir, the proposed Georgia law was but carrying out the spirit, if not a transcript, of the New York law, on the subject of fugitive slaves—striking out fugitive slaves, and inserting promissory notes, bonds, and accounts—not a whit more absurd than the laws of northern States, against the recovery of our property.

I have recommended, and my State has resolved to resist, to the extent of revolution, the consummation of certain measures. To prevent so deplorable a catastrophe, I shall feel it to be my duty to resort to every constitutional parliamentary expedient, regardless of threats which gentlemen make. Revolution—disunion, will be the inevitable consequence of the consummation of these measures. To prevent that consummation, it is our duty to try every expedient. Some of the means may appear revolutionary; but desperate dis-

eases require desperate remedies. Better a temporary disorganization, than permanent dissolution. If, as some of the State legislatures, and many members on this floor, have declared, you will listen to *no plan of compromise*—if you refuse to do us justice—if your fanatical love of the slave is greater than your sacred love of country, and you choose to dissolve the Union,—upon you rest the responsibility!

Gentlemen, we desire, ardently desire, union with you. But it must be *constitutional union*—a union of “*LIBERTY AND EQUALITY*.” Dearly as we love the Union, we love liberty more. We can only remain in the Union as your equals. All we ask is an equal participation in the benefits of our common Government. We claim a right to at least a portion of the territory acquired by our joint exertions. The principle of division has always, till now, been recognized. It was acknowledged in the case of Missouri and Texas. It should not be departed from now.

If you refuse to recognize our equality—if you insist on degrading us, and disunion follows—upon you be the curse—the *bitter, the deep, the damning curse!*

We shall be able to take care of ourselves, sir. With a community of interests, and the unbounded resources of the southern States, they might become one of the greatest Republics the world ever saw. But, gentlemen say, it is unpatriotic and treasonable, to calculate the advantage of a separate organization. We are driven to do so, sir. Northern gentlemen do it for us. They tell us that the Union is *incalculable to us*; that we should submit to any and everything, rather than endanger the Union. Self-defence demands that we should show them we are not so entirely dependent. But, sir, we make no *pecuniary* calculation of the value of the Union. We examine our political relation to, and connection with, the Federal Government. The man who is afraid to make *this calculation*, deserves not to be free; and the Government, which will not stand the test of examination, deserves not the respect of its citizens.

Sir, this was not the doctrine, nor the practice of our fathers. Had it been, we should not now be free. It is the doctrine inculcated by the present despotic President of France, but repudiated while he was a private citizen. It is the doctrine of the Sultan of Turkey; of the Autocrat of Russia; of power everywhere; of the *majority here*. They all preach blind submission to *power*, whether in one man, or in many. I hold, sir, with the patriots of the Revolution, with the authors of our Declaration of Independence, that, whenever a Government becomes subversive of the ends for which it was formed, it is the right and duty of the people to alter or abolish it.

You, gentlemen of the North, have well calculated the value of the Union. You make this calculation every day and every hour. Hence the paeans you continually sing to it—hence your declaration of willingness to sacrifice so many thousands of your fellow-citizens to preserve it—hence the absurd threat of a gentleman from Illinois, that his State will send “four times nine regiments” against the southern States to *force them to love the Union*. To you it may be incalculable. To you it may be necessary to save you from the effects of Socialism, Agrarianism, Fanny

Wrightism, Radicalism, Dorrism and Abolitionism. The *conservatism of slavery* may be necessary to save you from the thousand destructive isms infecting the social organization of your section. The great complaint of the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CAMPBELL] and others, is, that Government does not afford them protection enough. We ask no protection; we only ask to be let alone.

I repeat, sir, I have no fears but that the South can maintain its independence, and sustain itself in any struggle which may result from this or any other cause. The threat of another gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. ROOT,] is merely ridiculous. A single cannon, planted on the banks of the Mississippi, will blow his steamboat and his regiment of Ohio men, who are to be sent to conquer us into subjection, and to retain us by force in the Union, into a thousand atoms. Nor do we fear the threat of the gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. MANN,] that the northern people will steal away our three millions of slaves. Should they do so, they will do us, according to their own showing, the greatest benefit. It is for them to say what disposition they will make of these three millions of free negroes. But, sir, we should feel less apprehension then than now. We do not find northern gentlemen attempting to perjure slaves from Cuba and Brazil; nor did they meddle with Texas when a separate Government. Unpleasant restrictions might be placed upon their commerce. Another, and perhaps the chief reason for this, is given by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS,] when he says, “This Government cannot preach a crusade of liberty *unto other States and nations*.” The northern States, and the northern people say they regard slavery as a “*national disgrace*”—a sin against God and man—a *stigma upon them*, and for which they, as constituent members of the Confederacy, are responsible. They would have no such feeling toward a foreign Government. But I see that I cannot pursue this subject farther. I must repeat, however, that I am far, very far, from desiring a separation. My only purpose is to show that we are not so entirely dependent on the Federal Government, as to submit to the infamous propositions to dishonor and degrade us. If we do tamely submit to what is proposed, my friend from North Carolina, [Mr. CLINGMAN,] says we deserve to be whipped through our fields by our slaves. I think, sir, we shall merit the deeper disgrace of being kicked, at every corner of the streets, by the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. GIDDINGS,] who has sneeringly told us, we “could not be *kicked out of the Union*.” But, sir, we know the danger, the fierce strifes, the bloody wars, and all the horrors of civil convulsion, which may ensue. We fear, and would avoid them. The South may go down in the struggle. We do not court this danger, and these possible, and even probable, calamities. But the fear of them will never deter us from maintaining the right. A brave man stops not to calculate the consequences, when his honor, or his rights, are assailed, before he seeks to vindicate himself.

I see, sir, the time allotted to me has nearly expired. I regret that it is not in my power to express my views on the subject immediately before the committee—the admission of California into the Union. I shall avail myself of the earliest occasion to do so.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I can only say,

that the southern people will "resist to the last extremity" the doctrine that the powers and functions of the General Government must be used to assail, and not to protect their rights, interests, and property. However much we may desire "better safeguards for our future security," we seek no remedy "*outside of the Constitution*," so long as it is respected in its letter and *its spirit*. We are content with its guaranties, and ask no protection than that we may find under its sheltering wing. We stand by the contract our fathers made for us. So long as the spirit of that contract is observed, we shall never look to its dissolution as a remedy for existing evils.

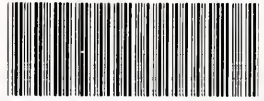
Regarding the Constitution and the Union as one, nowhere is it held in such high reverence as among the people of the southern States. They compose the *minority* in this Government, and

look to the Constitution as their shield and their protection. They regard it as the palladium of their rights and liberties. Never will *they* lay violent or sacrilegious hands upon it. They love it for the thousand endearing associations attaching to it. They cling to it as their surest hope.

Gentlemen of the North, respect the Constitution. Carry out the principles of that sacred instrument in the spirit in which it was framed. Love the Union, as we of the South do—the hallowed Union of our common fathers—a Union of "liberty and equality," not a Union to be made an instrument of wrong and oppression. Then may we, and our children, and our children's children, proceed, hand in hand together, in one common pathway of boundless prosperity, cheered by the hopeful prospect of a still brighter and happier future. *May THIS UNION be perpetual!*

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